

81st GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

By the Rev. David Jackson, Deputy, Diocese of Hawai'i

This year's General Convention in Louisville went back to a more extended format of 9 days compared to that two years ago, the shortened COVID convention of just four days in length. I was heartened by what I saw as signs of vitality in our national denomination, The Episcopal Church. The worship services were inspiring, with engaging sermons, stirring music, and the involvement of several different cultures represented up front. And the participation of many young adults as Deputies was very encouraging, in addition to our Official Youth Presence from across our church, including Holy Trinity's own Nicholas Livingston! Nicolas and several others of the OYP made their voices heard and presented cogent arguments for their stances.

While the election of the next Presiding Bishop, as well as that of the President of the House of Deputies and the VP of the same house, seemed to promise competitive if not contentious contests, it turned out that there emerged a sense of consensus and unity with only one vote being required for each office. I was especially pleased with the election of the Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe, who had been one of my professors in my Doctor of Ministry program at Virginia Theological Seminary -- I found him to be very personable, responsive to student's needs, highly intelligent, and managerially-competent in having had to oversee two separate dioceses at the same time.

Our Hawaiian Deputation sponsored and supported resolutions (bills) close to our hearts, all of which passed in both houses of Deputies and Bishops:

1. The Fresh Water initiative, affirming the right of all people to fresh water and especially to the non-encroachment of governmental and commercial interests on and near Indigenous lands.
2. The formal merging of the Episcopal Church in Micronesia with our diocese: As you know, our Bishop is our Bishop Diocesan for this diocese while he has been Bishop-in-Charge of ECM.
3. The trial-use approval of the Feast Day of Queen Lili'uokalani for 29 January in Lesser Feasts and Fasts. For her to be permanently approved, we need a positive vote of two successive General Conventions. She just got the first approval for trial use, and the second vote for permanent inclusion will take place at the next General Convention in 2027.

In addition, there were a few resolutions to do with the full inclusion of LGBTQI+ members, including additions to our liturgical resources for updated wording for marriage rites.

Notably, there were no "nay" votes when the vote was taken -- a far cry from even a mere ten years ago in our national church.

Several members of our deputation also took part in smaller committees, especially those to do with unique-expressed cultural and ethnic identities. I also happened to get elected once again to the Joint Nominating Committee for the Election of the Presiding Bishop (JNCEPB), thanks to the support of our deputation and others.

Finally, I am thankful for the spirit of friendship and camaraderie among our own Hawai'i Deputation, and thank Ryan Kusumoto and Kim Arakawa for serving as our Co-Chairs, as well as my fellow Deputation members. I have grown and learned much from our work and ministry together -- our Diocese should be proud!

Maluia i Ke Akua,

Kawika Jackson+